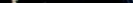


A Belgian J-Culture Magazine

Nr 14: September - October 2013

Halloween edition



Interviews

GHOST HARLEM

Tokami Eleanor
boy bacillo

eleanor

Gloria in Excelsis

angela

LunieShop

Fashion

& features

Halloween

Sherlock

Tokyo Disney

The Fact Is:

my way my love

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Photographers: Babs Barning, Stoff im Gehirn, Bert Van den Wyngaert

Special thanks to: 8tea5 (www.8tea5.be), Character Central, Kiwamu Kai, King Records

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by people interviewed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the BCM staff and thus we cannot and will not be held responsible for them.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 14th edition of BCM, our third yet *Halloween* edition! And of course, it wouldn't be our annual spooky holiday issue if it weren't for the Halloween feature! This time we have an article about turning your preferred J-fashion style into an outfit appropriately Halloween as well as a fashion feature showcasing outfits like that.

That's of course not our only fashion feature! With *BBC Sherlock* (finally) returning to television in November for a third season we have dedicated a feature to our favourite sleuth and other characters from the show and books! And it doesn't end there! We have a big interview + feature on *Tokyo Disney* and the Halloween celebrations at the Japanese Disney Resort, courtesy of *Character Central*, who were kind enough to lend us a hand in putting it together!

And of course there is also music!

We have excellent noise-rock band *my way my love* on the cover, spoke to metal bands *GHOST HARLEM*, *Tokami*, *eleonor* (who will be in Belgium in October for a live at *Metal Female Voices Fest*) and our very own *Gloria in Excelsis* as well as veteran anime soundtrack composers *angela*!

For event reporting purposes we visited several European conventions in the past summer so we could bring you review and the highlight of those.

And we interviewed BCM artist and J-fashionista *Margot Van Malderen* for our Cupcake Snap and the forever stylish *Lunie* on the subject of her, soon to open, online shop: *LunieShop*.

I hope you'll find all of this enjoyable!

And a huge thank you to all our readers and contributors for making yet another issue happen!

Hilde Heyvaert
Chief editor



It's that time of the year again for our annual Halloween edition! And of course, BCM wouldn't be BCM without a fashion feature! The past two spooky holiday themed issues we have already discussed *Guro Lolita* and *Halloween Lolita*, so if you want to know more about either of those, please grab a copy of *Belgian Cupcakes Magazine* # 3 and BCM # 8 from the site's past editions section.

THIS ISSUE WE'LL TALK ABOUT MIXING HALLOWEEN WITH JAPANESE FASHION STYLES. BECAUSE LET'S FACE IT, YOU CAN TURN ANY STYLE INTO AN OUTFIT REPRESENTING YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY, NOT JUST HALLOWEEN, BUT I'M SURE THAT AFTER YOU FINISH READING THIS ARTICLE YOU CAN JUST REPLACE HALLOWEEN WITH WHICHEVER HOLIDAY OF YOUR CHOICE.

There are many ways to go about creating the perfect Halloween themed J-fashion outfit. You can be very casual about it by simply adding a couple of prominent, as to make it clear your outfit is holiday themed, Halloween accessories, or go completely over the top with it. There are options for every preference and every budget. And it needn't be (bright) orange or full of Halloween style prints either to be either suitable or acceptable.

First and foremost, whichever style you choose to go with, stay true to the rules and basics of that style. I cannot stress this enough, because if you don't, you may end up with an outfit that is indeed holiday themed, but has little or nothing to do with the original style you intended. So really know the style you're going for before you even start mixing it up with any kind of holiday or theme!

If you are going for say, a *Pastel Goth* or *Cult Party kei* outfit, there's absolutely no use throwing in very bright orange. Just like when going for *Dolly-kei*, you should choose an appropriately (vintage) Halloween style print or the right shade of fall colours to accompany your wardrobe for that particular day, for both garments and accessories. Choose more vintage style Halloween, classic autumnal or Harvest prints rather than modern day Halloween prints. Keep the bright and modern designs for styles where they belong, such as *Decora* to name but one.

Some styles will lend themselves to Halloweenification better and easier than others. *Decora*, which is naturally bright by nature, is very suitable to add the brighter and best known, spectrum of themed colours and designs. A fun bright Halloween print and many Halloween hair accessories suit this style marvellously.

Lighter colour styles ask for accessories and/or garments in colours appropriate to your outfit. Thankfully Halloween has long stopped being just black and oranges with smidges of noxious green and purple bordering on the electric side and you can find many fabrics instantly suitable for any kind of J-fashion style at the better supplier of quilt fabrics.

As is the case with many J-fashion styles, DIY and looking in the more unusual stores comes in handy with these kinds of outfits, especially when you are on a budget.

For instance, stores selling home décor may very well have good basic supplies you can easily turn into jewelry. If they don't have the right colour, well you may be able to paint in the shade you want. Consider your local hobby shop for acrylic paints to help you out. If you are a bit handy: air dry clay and Fimo are your friend.

A lot of websites such as *family.go.com* or even the *Martha Stewart* one have special sections with a lot of good ideas and craft tutorials on how to make awesome bits and bobs (and recipes too for those hosting a party), so make sure to make good use of those google skills beyond relaying on just youtube tutorials!

Definitely make sure to check out the high street stores, because more often than not they get in black cat or bat print type sweaters that would suit several of the more contemporary or relaxed styles such as *Pastel Goth* or *Aomiji kei*. But in any case you never know what you'll find that works with other styles as well.

And of course thrift and second hand shops because if they do get Halloween themed things in, you can be sure they'll be getting them out from the stockroom and into the store for the season.

And for those that can afford it, there are of course the Halloween themed releases of Japanese brands, going from Lolita to indi and lesser known brands.

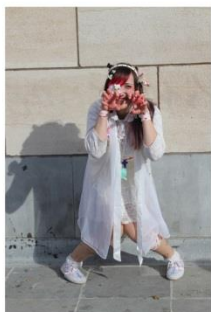
If you don't want to bother with accessories or garments specially for the holiday, you can wear what you always wear and add the Halloween flavour by using make-up. The internet is full of good horror, monster and gore make-up tutorials you can use, often without having to spend any significant amounts of money on supplies. British make-up brand *Snazaroo* for instance has something called *Cake Blood*, which is basically instant gore applicable with a brush, sponge or heck, kitchen paper, and it's cheap. So yeah, theatre supply shops are your friend, as their quality is often as good as the big brands and you'll spend a lot less!

Subtle touches such as wound make up, bloody tears, or full on zombie or monster looks can really make an outfit that, without it, would be something that has nothing to do with the holiday what so ever.

Combining the guro look of bandages and wounds is very popular, and effective with literally _any and all_ J-fashion styles.

So you see, there are plenty of options of taking an outfit and adding the Halloween spirit in any way you see fit and still stay true to both representing the holiday and the J-fashion style of your choice. Checking whether you've succeeded is easy enough, look at the outfit, run the rules through your head and if you're looking both spooky holiday style and exactly as the fashion style should look, you can readily call it a success.

Happy trick or treating!



*This our town of
Halloween!*





Bonnet, Fly Away Fashion. **Hair flowers**, Veritas and Forever 21. **Wig**, Minty Mix. **Frames and vampire fangs**, model's own. **Blouse**, H&M. **Wristcuffs**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Trick or Treat bucket**, Disneyland Paris. **Skirt**, Fly Away Fashion. **Petticoat**, model's own. **Tights and socks**, Veritas. **Shoes**, Minky Shop.

Style: Holiday Lolita, in this case, obviously, Halloween.



Guro style Cult Party kei.



Hairband, Hema. Specs, Theo. Flower brooch, H&M. Blouse, Forever 21. Cardigan, Primark. Rosary necklace, customised from a rosary bought at Castrum. Tassel, customised Chien Vert. Belt with rose detail closure, New Look. Pumpkin print skirt, House of Secrets Incorporated. Nylons, Insua. Boots, Forever 21.

Style: Dolly-kei with some autumnal details and print to represent the Halloween season.



Guro/Monster Lolita.



From left to right:
Guro Shiro Lolita, Guro Cult Party kei, Guro Cult Party kei and a very mildly Guro style mix between Sweet Lolita and Cult Party kei.



130JET and MaRy of Strange Artifact at the Kawasaki Halloween Parade in Tokyo, October 28 2012, representing the Steampunk scene in the Japanese capital.

Want to catch them at another Tokyo Halloween event or simply attend one, this may be your chance!
Get Ready for Halloween takes place at *Shinjuku Marui One* from September 6 to 25 in Tokyo, Japan.
Shop website: <http://maruione.jp/en>



Goggles, Trentles, customised vintage. Frames, Theo. Pumpkin print Top, shirt, skirt and pumpkin print spats, House of Secrets Incorporated. Bag, vintage. Leggings, American Apparel. Boots, Kickers. Dark brown umbrella with orange pinstripes and copper details, H.Due.O.

Style: contemporary Steampunk meets Halloween

JUNE LOLITA FASHION MEET

Sunday, June 30th - Hasselt - Belgium

optional theme: fruit

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and a kind passer-by





Event: Japan Expo
When: July 4 - 7
What: J-culture convention
Where: Parc des Expositions Paris-Nord-Villepinte, Villepinte, France
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.japan-expo.com

From Thursday July 4 to Sunday the 7th the annual double extravaganza that is *Japan Expo* and *Comic Con Paris* were held at *Expo Paris-Nord-Villepinte*. As far as Japanese culture conventions go, this edition of Japan Expo (because there's also a *Sud*, *Centre* and *Belgium* edition) is THE con. All other J-culture conventions in Europe pale in comparison due to the vast magnitude of things on offer at this one. And it's also one of the longest running ones (possibly the longest running one but I'm not sure about that) with its 19th edition this year.

Now you could enter the convention via either the Japan Expo or the Comic Con side. Floor plans where back to back, so you had one map for both conventions. Programs, however, were separate in the paper versions you could pick up at select point, but at the info pillars (which were very well placed in both conventions) you could find the programs for both events. Both had "main roads" so to speak, marked with a strip of carpet. At Japan Expo this was orange, at Comic Con this was blue, so you could easily see at which convention you found yourself. This colour indication was also used on the maps, which made things even easier.

This is an event that is well visited but not overly crowded on the first day, but that gradually becomes far busier on the Friday, hectic and overcrowded on Saturday and still very crowded on Sunday. The organisation knows this, and has anticipated it well by making sure there are vast spaces where you can go and sit and have a bit of a breather inside as well as outside. They also made sure that there are wide passageways everywhere, which at least helps to regulate the crowdedness somewhat. Of course, once it gets busy, the temperature in the expo goes up, everyone gets sluggish and you're not getting anywhere fast because people are moving at a pace where they may get beaten to their destination by the average snail. Which can be pretty annoying but it's definitely not the organisation's fault.

Facilities wise *Expo Paris-Nord-Villepinte*, where the event is being held, is excellent. There's a large (sadly overpriced) parking lot, easy access via public transport, a free shuttle bus that takes you from the convention to the parking lot and back (you can walk the distance, it's about 15-20 minutes I'd say, if you don't want to take a very full shuttle bus), plenty of toilets (in various states of cleanliness towards the end of the day, but

free), plenty of places to get food and drinks inside and each convention has their own first aid station.

As a note on food and drinks: there are no convenience stores nearby, but you are allowed to bring your own. Which I advise you do. Whilst there are concession stands in the Expo, ranging from two bakery PAULS (a French chain you find internationally in Europe), a whole slew of places that do sandwiches and other small snacks, sushi places, a bubble tea bar, slushy stand etc etc etc it is largely VERY expensive. Especially drinks were, in my opinion, grossly overpriced. Charging nearly € 5 for a bottle of ice tea is just taking the piss. Especially as it gets hot inside the convention and people will need to drink. So definitely bring your own if you don't want to pay extortionate prices.

And now, finally, onto Japan Expo itself! I have visited several J-culture conventions in the past, and in several countries and this is indeed the biggest I've been to. It is also the most extensive one. Of course you will see things you see at other conventions, and of course part of the program is the same thing. But generally they get bigger names to perform, sign and be present at their event. You see guests you never see at other events and the amount of Japanese companies present you won't see anywhere else is also quite impressive. Aside from that, they also had martial arts showcases you don't really see anywhere else, such as the traditional Japanese archery. And the level of the exhibits by professional martial artists was definitely higher than what I've previously seen. For the car fanatics they had a tuning stand displaying several pimped models of Japanese car brands, which was also nice. They even tried their hand at a French variation of WWF wrestling, but I wouldn't go as far as calling that a success. But you know, they tried.

There were several stages where you could watch cosplayers do their thing, lectures, bands and much more having to do with something Japanese or other.

All kinds of J-culture things were present going from Karaoke, shopping, magazines, anime, manga, food, street fashion, travel to Japan, exhibits, exhibits currently happening in Japan and much, much more.

There was such an overflow of Japanese things that they had to house some inside Comic Con, such as the maid café, a second Sushi Shop and nico nico douga's stand.

In short, if you love J-culture conventions and want to be able to see and experience things you won't be able to do at the standard or smaller sized conventions, then I would definitely recommend Japan Expo. It does it's best, and succeeds pretty well, in catering to all various parts of the J-culture experience, and combined with Comic Con Paris almost everyone will be able to find at least something to their liking that makes the visit definitely worthwhile.

For more see the review of *Comic Con Paris* in this issue!
 Review by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.
 Photography by Hilde Heyvaert, David Pleszak, Margot Van Malderen and Annsou Vermeylen.



PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN EXPO 2013

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert, David Pleszak, Bert Van den Wyngaert and Anso Vermeylen.



Event: Comic Con Paris
When: July 4 - 7
What: Popular culture/all things geeky convention
Where: Parc des Expositions Paris-Nord-Villepinte, Villepinte, France
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.comic-con-france.com

Comic Con Paris, the French version of the fabled and infamous *San Diego Comic Con* is a relatively new (celebrating its 5th anniversary this year) and slightly smaller than some other pop culture conventions of its kind. The combination of both this and *Japan Expo*, however, is a very good one, as it makes sure to considerably enlarge the things on offer to visitors by providing a far larger interest range which in turn, draws more people.

It was, as is to be expected, geek central. With large presence of French multimedia company *Ankama*, who are the brains behind the computer game *Wakfu* as well as the publishing house behind many wonderfully drawn graphic novels. Sadly all in French, but that's to be expected from a convention in France. That said, I think that Ankama would really benefit from English or Dutch language versions (seeing they are based in Roubaix and thus close to the Belgian border). But I digress.

Aside from Ankama with *Wakfu*, the other large video game presence was, unsurprisingly, *Nintendo*.

The *Nintendo Village* took up a more than significant portion of the convention, with heavy promotion of the *3DS* and even more so: the *Wii-U*, where you could try out all the latest games, and all those with classic characters that made Nintendo famous such as the *Mario Bros* and *Donkey Kong*. They even had meet and greet characters of *Pikachu* and *Mario* and *Luigi*.

I liked how the convention had a LARP village, even though it seemed far more promising on the map than what it really was, it was nice to see they made room for roleplayers. Aside from the LARP village, they also had a role playing games, board games, gun play areas and a *Dungeons and Dragons* exhibit. So plenty of things to do for the non-video inclined gamer.

Aside from that they focussed on newer and older TV shows and movies, such as a *Buffy* cast reunion, the 50th anniversary of *Doctor Who* with the *TARDIS* and Sunday presence of show writer *Mark Gatiss* and a *World War Z* exhibit and a movie cars section, to name but a few of the great many things that were happening at this convention.

It was nice to see how varied Comic Con Paris was, making sure there was something suitable to most popular culture interests and not just following the current craze but making sure that their offer was well rounded.

All in all, this combination of conventions is well worth the ticket price because you will see original things you don't see at other conventions in Europe, the offer is enormous and you definitely get a great value for your ticket.

I'm not entirely sure I agree with the notion that you have to go at least two days to be able to see everything at the combined Japan Expo and Comic Con Paris. I think it's probably true for the weekend as those are very hectic days with the most visitors, but I think that if you go on the Thursday and make sure you're there when the doors open, you can happily browse and experience the conventions in one, very full, day. I do wholeheartedly occur with the sentiment that this is one of the best conventions Europe has to offer, and I would really recommend it to all fans of either Japanese or popular culture.



Angelic Pretty Tea Party

Un après midi chez Madame de Lompadour - Sunday, July 7 - Hôtel le Meurice - Paris - France

Photography by and provided by Annso vermeylen.





Event: Convention Lolita
When: July 7 & 8
What: J-culture convention
Where: Salle 66Pelleport, Paris, France
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.conventionlolita.wordpress.com

Everyone really tried their best. The music most designers chose for their show was just perfect!

Some designers just took my breath away: *Lady Sloth*, *Lusty'n Wonderland*, *The Snow Field* and *Haenuli*, they were just perfect! Even more beautiful in real life than in pictures! Their creations are just perfect, they took care of every detail! Left nothing to coincidence!

Too bad not all designers strived to this kind of perfection! There was one that only brought their dummies to the show, which was really disappointing since other designers brought their best!

Clara Maeda showed us her Mori-kei designs and I have to say, they were just stunning! Her creations were just beautiful! There was nothing else to say about her creations but sheer perfection! The models also looked as if they just walked out of a magazine!

Lady Sloth showed many creations, all perfectly made and of great quality. She showed items from when she first started out to her latest creations. All perfectly made and all really well fitting!

Lusty'n Wonderland also showed us really great designs. She showed us some really versatile outfits that could perfectly be Lolita, but depending on the situation also be an epic evening gown or really fancy dress! The details on her creations also were really well executed and thought out! As a finishing act, *Fairy Chantilly* was a great ending: fun, funky and not so serious! I loved it! Also, our two Belgian Cupcakes (editor: Belgian Cupcakes are a Belgian Lolita community), *Vief* (who is now living in the UK) and *Annsa* were two of their models!

After the show we all just ran outside to cool down a bit. Not that it was cold outside, but it was just less hot than inside!

I think all in all the fashion show was great! All designers had their distinctive creations and we could all see their different views and visions! After the show I didn't really stay long on the convention! It was just too hot and I just couldn't stay any longer without fainting!

In conclusion:

For myself: next year, bring some more cash so I can buy something at the second hand booth without regretting not getting that particular item for a great price! The second hand stand was a great idea and great success!

To the organisers of the convention I can only say two things; congratulations, keep up the good work and next year, maybe use some airco!

Review by Saltje Khenfi. Photography by Babs Barning.

After taking a few metro's to arrive near the location we still had to walk 300 meters or so and I started wondering what everyone would be wearing. The more steps I took, the more I melted, the more I was curious to see who had gone all the way and who adapted to the weather!

When I arrived I saw that all girls went all the way! I saw layers of clothing, wigs, accessories... It made me smile and happy to see that everyone was looking just perfect!

Because the website gave really great info on how to find the location, there was no need for searching, just follow the directions they gave and all went fine! At the doors, it all went really quick and so we were inside in a jiffy! The first room had an artist that was doing a signing session, a store and a bar for drinks and cupcakes! Then the room after this was just a wall of indie brands! You could really shop till you drop! I loved it! There were so many nice shops and things for everyone's taste and style! *Gothic Lolita*, *Sweet Lolita*, *Mori-kei*... you name it, it was there. There was also a place where you could get hair and make-up done!

I've met a lot of new people and got in contact with some of the indie-designers! At this moment, for me, there was only one downer and that was the incredible heat that we were in! This is of course not the fault of the convention but mother nature... slowly we all were just melting! As time went along, I noticed a lot of Lolitas were arriving and it got more and more crowded! I was really looking my eyes out to see everyone's outfit. I also noticed that there were more and more photographers there! All male and none of them dressed up or anything! That felt a little strange!

The Fashion show!

At the exact time as was announced beforehand, they told us the fashion show would start and the doors would be closed in half an hour, after which no one could enter or leave! So, slowly we were all getting ourselves a spot on the floor around the area where the fashion show would pass by! After waiting forty five long minutes, finally the show started!



JULY LOLITA FASHION MEET

Sunday, July 14th - Antwerp - Belgium
8tea5 bubble tea bar

Photography by 8tea5.be (group shot) and Hilde Heyvaert





Event: Atsusacon
When: July 20 - 21
What: J-culture convention
Where: Antwerp Expo, Antwerp, Belgium
Ticket price: varied
Website: www.atsusacon.be

For the third year in a row *Atsusacon* claimed *Antwerp Expo* as it's home on a sunny weekend in July. Normally I always go on the Sunday, but seeing that this year it clashed with the Belgian National Holiday, on which *King Albert* abdicated in favour of his son *Filip*, who got crowned on that day, as well as a large event in the *Antwerp Zoo*, I decided to not brave the hell that public transport no doubt would be on the Sunday and go on Saturday. I'm absolutely certain that neither event would have kept visitors from *Atsusacon*, seeing they were all so radically different. Plus, if you can choose between going to some crowded affair and the co-siest convention in the country, surely J-culture affectionados have no difficulty making a choice.

Because *Atsusacon* may indeed be smaller, it is very cozy and is characterised by its friendly, open minded atmosphere. It's one of those cons where you go, meet friends you don't see often and have a great time hanging out, browsing the shops and plain old enjoying the convention.

It is divided in two sections: the downstairs where you have the main lobby with the information desk, cloak room and toilets, as well as the dealer room. And then the upstairs section where there's a small food are, they host several events and have room for people to relax. If you don't mind sitting on the floor mind (but the floors are clean enough so that's something) as space can be a bit scarce. This makes that people at times need to search a bit, but with a little exploring you've quickly figured out what's going on where. And if you used the handy program the organisation had sorted out, you had no trouble finding things at all.

Due to its smaller size it's not as horribly crowded as the bigger conventions earlier and later in the year. There's no getting stuck in the crowd or missing out on stands because there are so many people you can't even see they are there. There's enough room to manoeuvre, look at wares and try things on for size. Even though the dealer room is significantly smaller than that of other similar events, they have a good variety on offer and I even saw some things I didn't see at other conventions.

Whilst they didn't have a separate gaming section per se, they solved that by setting up a nice gaming station near the entrance of the dealer room, keeping a room for the card gamers and another one where people could play *Nippon Zasshi's Attack of the Oni*, their very own custom version of *Werewolves*, only with Japanese demons as the villains of the story.

There were panels, a cosplay competition (thankfully with better presenters than last year), *Taiko* demonstrations, a quiz, martial arts demos and several workshops and a *Yu-Gi-Oh* tournament.

I have to say they really did a great job offering such a wide range of things to attend, watch or participate in this year, and it's definitely something that I hope they will keep up in the future.

People also didn't have to go hungry if they hadn't packed their own food as there was a little restaurant where you could get affordable noodles and curry. And for those not in the mood for those you could get hot dogs and sandwiches in the dealer room. All very reasonably priced, just as well as the drinks, which made for a refreshing change!

I personally also liked how the organisation had tried to provide serious temperature control due to the summer heat outside. Some of the doors in the dealer room to the parking lot had been opened up so smokers didn't have to go far, but people could also just go outside to get some fresh air without actually having to leave the convention if they didn't feel like it. And in other rooms they tried aircor to keep the heat in check, with various success but at least they did their best! So bonus points for being considerate!

In short, it's a convention that is basically still starting up, and I feel that every single year it improves. The organisation really does the effort to listen to its visitors and learn from their constructive criticism and things that went wrong, making every edition better than the last. I firmly believe that if they keep going the way they are now, they will become one of the biggest and more importantly: best J-culture cons Belgium has to offer. Frankly they already are one of the best in this particular field. Yes it's small, yes there are flaws (but let's face it, you get those at every single convention), but nothing can replace the atmosphere that makes *Atsusacon* unique and different to things like *Japan Expo Belgium* and *Made in Asia*. It's really organised out of the love for all things Japanese and you can see that they genuinely want to provide a good time, rather than organise an event for the profit that comes with something as popular as J-culture. So if you haven't yet and have the opportunity, make sure to give this convention a chance!

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Babs Barring and Hilde Heyvaert.



Event: HYPER JAPAN

When: July 26 - 28

What: J-culture convention

Where: Earls Court, London, UK

Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula

Website: www.hyperjapan.co.uk.

London once again welcomed a HYPER JAPAN event, the fifth already, held at the spacious *Earls Court Two*. The Earls Court Two proved once again to be an excellent choice of venue for the event with its large space inside to roam freely about in and a very short walk away from two tube stations (and an convenient bus route). Despite the easy access attendees confronted a problem that I didn't experience at the previous years event - the haphazard queuing system. There were three separate queues, fine in principle, but sadly with the sheer volume of people and not enough door staff to be on hand to help with queries, people often felt lost and took a guess as to where they needed to be. But this was bound to be an issue as the popularity of HYPER JAPAN grows with each event.

Once inside you are overwhelmed with a wonderful array of stalls filled with trinkets, clothing, books, art and the delicious aroma of Japanese food. It's easy to miss stalls and to be honest, you don't want to miss any of the stalls at HYPER JAPAN. Each had something different and interesting to offer and the staff manning the stalls are very friendly and courteous. So, it was a relief when you are handed a floor guide upon entering. This is also handy to find out where live events are situated such as *SIRO-A's* performance, the *Cosplay Parade*, the geisha talk held by Geisha *Sayuki* and more.

The food stalls were probably one of the highlights of the event for many people. With freshly cooked *katsu* curry, *sake* tasting, iced desserts and varieties of *ramen* to fill your hungry belly, the biggest decision you had to face was where to eat first! But, unless you were one of the first to enter, you had to possess a certain amount of patience. The queues for food could be somewhat off putting, but if you would allow yourself the time, the wait is worth it. Hot food was cooked in front of you and the smell is rather intoxicating, fresh and tasty. This provides a really good insight for those that are sampling the flavours of Japan for the first time, but equally this is a great opportunity for fans of Japanese food to fill up on some favourites.

Despite the number of people in attendance, you didn't feel on top of each other. This is due to stalls being grouped into small groups (usually 4) backing onto each other and then leaving a decent size path on all sides. This is also necessary for people wearing large cosplays that want to enjoy the event without a flow of people pushing against their hard work!

One of my favourite things about this year's HYPER JAPAN event was the open forum for indie designers and crafts people inspired by Japanese art and fashion. This was seriously lacking last year and it was a refreshing surprise to find so many talented people given the opportunity to share their ideas inspired by different facets in Japanese culture. With this, it gives the event a healthy mix of things for everyone and not just something that caters mainly to one set of people and leaves others alienated.

HYPER JAPAN is going from strength to strength, opening itself up to more choice and interactive events for its attendants. With only the small, niggling, issue of their queuing system. Despite that negative, it's not something that should deter anyone from attending as it grows in popularity and becomes a keen favourite to con goers and fans of Japanese culture. HYPER JAPAN is now, more than ever, becoming the convention people presumed it was going to be. A convention that acted as a genuine taste of Japan and what it has to offer to fans of Japanese street fashion, Anime and tradition. Japan has so much to offer those that set foot onto it's soil, but at least HYPER JAPAN gives you that little taste of what awaits you.





AUGUST J-FASHION MEET

Saturday, August 10

Visiting the Antwerp Zoo

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert
and Stéphanie Vandevorde (group shot).



On Sunday the 11th of August, my friends and I met at the local train station and from there on we went to *Utrecht* in The Netherlands taking my car.

Since everyone on Facebook was really nice, I had the perfect coordinates to get there so, in one go we ended up the right place. A little bit late... but hey, that was the traffic's fault, not ours.

When we arrived at the *Wilhelmina park* and found the group, I was so surprised to see how many Lolitas there were! And everyone was dressed just picture perfect! So many details and everyone in different dresses! You could see everyone's personality in their outfits and how much effort they have put in them! It was so lovely to see.

Since it was a picnic everyone brought lovely things, I managed to eat a mozzarella - tomato stick, brioche and a mochi that someone had brought and shared. And everything super yummy of course. After dinner we all started to mingle and hang out to get to know each other! I've met so many new, lovely girls and decided to attend some more Dutch meet-ups in the future!

Then Leyla, the host, gathered all of us together to make a group picture and there was a lovely lady photographer that made the pictures. I don't know her name, but I do thank her very much for doing so and making the meet-up happen.

As time flew by, which was sad I thought, we ended up splitting in two groups, one that went to a local restaurant and another group that went home. I was in the second group since I still a long drive ahead of me!

Review anphotography by and provided by Saltje Khenfi.



AGNES VAN DE GENACHTE IS A STUDENT AT THE KUL (CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN) IN BELGIUM AND IS CURRENTLY LIVING AND STUDYING IN JAPAN AS PART OF A PRESTIGIOUS ONE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP. FOR BCM SHE WRITES A COLUMN ABOUT HER LIFE AND ADVENTURES IN NIIGATA WHENEVER SHE CAN SPARE THE TIME.

This is going to be my last Japan column, for I will almost be back home by the time this gets published.

Before the start of the new school year (so until April), students were permitted to smoke on campus grounds. There were a few dedicated smoking areas where smokers could catch a break between classes and have a cigarette (mind you, those smoking areas were few and far in between). But since April, smoking on university grounds is prohibited and the smoking areas have been removed. So just like very smoking student in any given country would do, they now smoke right next to the university entrances. And that actually took me a while to notice, because contradictory to how it would go in Belgium, there were always no more than 3 to 5 students smoking at the same time. Perhaps it is the peer pressure of not smoking on the streets, which is also prohibited in most Japanese cities and for which you can get a fine when caught. But the most amazing thing I found to be the lack of cigarette-butts on the ground. Upon looking around, I could see maybe one or two of them, if any at all.

Japan is a very clean country and you'll rarely find abandoned candy wrappings or old chewing gum (and if it's there, there is a high chance that it's there because of a foreigner), which means that despite the lack of ashtrays at the university entrances, students are still polite enough not to throw their used cigarettes on the ground. And that is something that a lot of people in a lot of western countries can learn something from.

I also went to one of the three biggest firework displays in Japan, the one in *Nagaoka*. And it sure was big, nothing compared to the small and almost non-existing fireworks we get with New Years. The fireworks in Nagaoka were a two hour spectacle with lots of "oooohs" and "aaaahs". I'm pretty sure that I won't be able to enjoy a Belgian firework anymore after this.



I'm going to end this one with a list of five things that I'm going to miss about Japan when I'm back home (in no particular order). Of course, there are many more things that I could add.

1. The clean streets. All the streets here are so clean, you can't believe it. Compared to Japan, Belgian streets look like a garbage dumpster.

2. Karaoke. I really love going to karaoke, especially since you have karaoke boxes in Japan, which basically means that you and your friends have a private room and don't have to sing in front of a bunch of strangers. I'm really going to miss going to karaoke with my friends.

3. Convenience stores. They literally have everything there, going from fresh meals to snacks and toothbrushes. They're always open and only a little bit more expensive than the supermarket. You can even pay your bills, make prints and photocopies, buy tickets for events, etc.

4. Public transportation. It's one of the most well-known good points about Japan and it's going to make it really hard to adjust to Belgian public transportation again.

5. Stores are open on Sundays. This is going to be horrible when I'm back home, because I'm not used to a whole city being semi-dead on Sundays. I love that in Japan, even on a Sunday, I can go out and do some shopping and fully enjoy my weekend.

6. My scholarship. I'm going to miss having all that money every month, hahaha.

These six points don't seem all that impressive, but if you've gotten used to them for a whole year (or longer), it's not going to be so easy to live without them again.

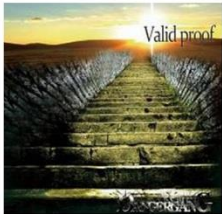
Article and photography by Agnes Van De Genachte.



J-MUSIC CORNER

Japanese music reviews and interviews.

Reviews by Hilde Heyvaert, Mdina Van der Linden, Bert Van den Wyngaert and Clara Lina Wirz.



DANGER GANG

Valid proof

EP

Release date: 12.6.2013

Valid proof is the first EP release with new band members *Ren* (drums) and *Mizuki* (bass) who first recorded with the band on their April 2012 release of the single *First Date*. In another first, this also includes songs written by the new members and their very first music video is also a song from this release, *Shangrila*. There's only five songs on the EP, which I'll break down for you. It opens up with the instrumental song *Energy#*, which has been clearly computer generated, but at the same time it does set the mood for the rest of the EP. On *ONE AND ONLY* the band goes over into a hard rock sound coupled with singer *Waka's* signature strong, low vocals. Those same vocals become a lot more melodic, along with the sound on the dark *Seijaku no Yoru he*. And then we've arrived at *Shangrila*, the song for which the very first DANGER GANG PV was made. Whilst keeping up with the firsts, they've used autotune on this one. Aside from that it's also different from the other songs as it's more upbeat, pop-rock and plain cheerful. The last song is *UNLIMITED*, which is also pretty fast paced and melodic, but at the same time has a rock feeling to it and that distinctive DANGER GANG sound in both vocals and melody. For those unfamiliar with DANGER GANG, it's a good introductory release as it includes both dark(er) and more cheerful songs, which is typical for this band. Whilst the songs are all pretty much in the same style and of the same type, there are subtle difference in mood and pace, which results in the musical variation typical for the band, who despite the differences still maintain coherency.



eleanor

Breathe Life into the Essence
Album

eleanor is a good solid Gothic Metal band, this latest 9 song release by them is an excellent album within that specific genre. Singer *Shiori Vitus'* voice is without doubt one of the strongest and most beautiful in this particular style and her range and timbre suit the melody perfectly. *Breathe Life into the Essence* is an album that will no doubt please Metal fans regardless of their preferred

genre due to the versatility in the songs and excellent composition. A definite recommendation for all fans of female fronted metal music. For Belgian fans and people that enjoy this kind of music, *eleanor* will be performing at *Metal Female Voices Fest* in Wieze later this year (see the BCM calendar for more details).



Elupia

Wilderness

EP

I'm positively surprised about this EP, the first song, *Risky Wine* didn't really do much for me as I found the electric guitars a bit too much, especially after the much softer intro with cello, violins and assorted instruments. The combination of both just did not work out. But after that it became much better and much more enjoyable. They mix a very fine soprano with classic orchestra sounds into heavy metal and they do it well. I was also surprised by the German text of their song *Ödland*, which was admirably performed with hardly any accent, which is an added feat considering the band is Japanese. All songs start nearly in the same way: quite slow like ballads with the other instruments getting added as the song evolves, always paired with those strong classic soprano vocals which makes for a nice combination. Aside from the first song, there is a very good coherence between music and vocals, with arrangements that suit the music and singer well. *Wilderness* makes for a more melodic style of music, often with piano, almost a bit like Nightwish, so fans of that kind of metal will very likely find *Elupia's* latest very enjoyable.



Gloria in Excelsis

Cage
Single

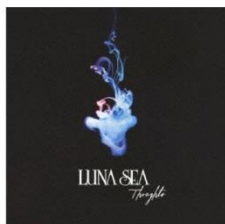
The debut single of Belgian based Vkei/metal artist *Gloria in Excelsis* brings us all the very best of the metal genre. Strong guitar riffs, pounding rhythmic drums and a melodious voice full of timbre and soul that matches the arrangements perfectly making *Cage* an epic song, plain and simple. It's available in Japanese and English version for free download via the artist's soundcloud at soundcloud.com/gloria-in-excelsis

It's definitely the kind of track that leaves you wanting more from the artist, so I look forward to her maxi single release later this year! Without doubt, Cage is one of the strongest debuts of 2013 and the fact that it's available for free should make everyone, metal fan or not, check it out and listen for themselves!



INORAN
I'm Here
Tour documentary DVD
Release date: 28.8.2013

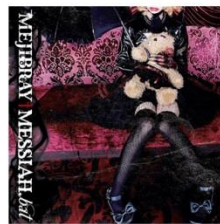
Last year *INORAN* undertook his first European tour, *The Seven Samurais European tour*, as well as held some concerts in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Taipei. This is the documentary of those lives, and of *INORAN*'s time in Europe. It's not just your average concert DVD and really lets you look into the lives of the artist, his band and crew and get you acquainted with his feelings as he looks back on those days. It's funny, philosophical and at times even has the feel of one of those awesome surrealist French films. What will really strike the viewer is how honest and sincere *INORAN* is in his narrative of his experiences and in looking back on these times past. It's not some happy-go-lucky recounting but an honest story about how he experienced things. They could have only focussed on the fabulous and happy things, but they didn't. Another great addition to this particular work is that it comes in English versions as well as Japanese on the same disk, so if you don't speak Japanese (or English) you can choose to set it to either language or activate subtitles in either. For those that were there it is a beautifully made reminiscence of the awesome times that we had during the tour, and for others it'll be a perfect window into those moments. For any fan of *INORAN* or documentaries full stop, this is something you just have to own.



LUNA SEA
Thoughts
Single
Release date: 28.8.2013

Thoughts, the newest release by Japanese rock band *LUNA SEA* is a mixed bag. On one hand it is an accomplished J-rock song: a solid riff, matching vocals, and not something you'd call unworthy of the signature *LUNA SEA* sound. On the other hand, they can do a lot better than this and they have done a lot better than this. *Thoughts* is, all in all, whilst it's good, not great and of all their new work since their reunion some years ago, their weakest release so far. On a full album this would no doubt make a nice addition to the track list but as a single it doesn't carry the strength it needs to be an A-side track. As has become tradition with *LUNA SEA* singles, this is a 2 song release. The other being *LOST WORLD*, the theme track to the online game *Master of Chaos*. It's a cool track and all, but I feel that it sadly

doesn't make up for the mediocrity (for this band's doing) of its A-side. If you like this type of J-rock, you'll probably still love *Thoughts*, but if you're more into the high flyers from *LUNA SEA*'s history it's only worth getting to complete your collection.



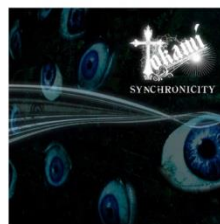
MEJIBRAY
Messiah.bat
Maxi single
Release date: 1.5.2013

This 5 song release by Japanese metal band *MEJIBRAY* is pretty much, rather more, along the lines of power metal with a hint of techno and EBM style music. Despite of that particular combination, it remains melodic with strong guitars. Aside from the style mixing, it's an overall normal metal combo. The vocals remain shouting free, and are more on the melodic chant side to the point where it sometimes becomes a bit pop song like.



the GazettE
FADELESS
Single
Release date: 21.8.2013

The latest three song single by J-rock band *the GazettE* is far better than anything they produced on their last album *DIVISION*, which wasn't a bad work of course, this just excels their previous release. The title track *FADELESS* is a good solid rock song would display the best of the band, were it not for the female vocals I personally find less than appealing as they seemed out of place, but Reita's bass solo more than makes up for that. All in all, it's just a really good song. The other two songs are *Forbidden Beaver*, a track to really let go to and I really look forward to seeing it performed live when the band tours Europe. The other one, *Quiet* is, as the name suggests a ballad. It's a lovely song, but strongly reminds me of their older songs *Kago no Sanagi*, *Ibitsu* and *An unbearable fact*, or better said: a mix thereof. In any case, the single is well worth it, and it's less than € 3 for the digital download so there's absolutely no reason for people that like either this genre or the band not to get it.



Tokami
SYNCHRONICITY
EP
Release date: 13.2.2013

Tokami's latest 7 song new release is an album full of good solid metal songs. They've experimented with their sound a little, and whilst it's not something I like, I do love how they dare to challenge their own skill. If you like good hard, more traditional metal, you'll likely love *SYNCHRONICITY* and I would definitely recommend it to you.

LIVE AT JAPAN EXPO 2013

Photography by David Pleszak.



Vocal & Piano: rui Drums: vetchie Bass: azami Guitar: sawah Guitar: rin

泣きたいくらい愛しい気持ちに
気付かせてくれた君へ

ミサルカ

「ロミオとジュリエット」を新コンセプトにしたシリーズ第二弾リリース!

New Maxi Single [-Rasen-] 2013.09.25 release

SWMR-6 / 発売元:Starwave Records / 販売元:FWD Inc. / 2,100円(税込) / 完全限定1000枚 CD収録曲:01.-Inizio della tristezza- 02.-Rasen- 03.-In the Dark- 04.-Armeria-DVD収録曲:01.-Rasen-(MV)

2013 ミサルカ 4都市ワンマンツアー「Valzer di amore e di tristezza〜愛と悲しみのワルツ〜」

10.15 (tue) 仙台 PARK SQUARE 10.21 (mon) 今池 CLUB 3STAR
10.22 (tue) 心斎橋 Club ALIVE! 10.27 (sun) 池袋 CYBER (二回公演)

三月連続パースデー主催イベント

07.05 (fri) 池袋 CYBER 08.06 (tue) 池袋 EDGE 09.04 (wed) 池袋 EDGE

Event Schedule

08.13 (tue) 埼玉会館ホール 08.20 (tue) 今池 CLUB 3STAR 08.21 (wed) 心斎橋 Club Alive! 08.26 (mon) 仙台 MACANA 08.27 (tue) 池袋 EDGE
09.13 (fri) 池袋 CYBER 09.26 (thr) 池袋 EDGE 10.7 (mon) 池袋 手刀 10.9 (wed) 池袋 EDGE



1stミニアルバム [-Juliet-]
SWMR-5 / 2940円(税込) 全限定1000枚
CD+DVD 在庫残少



1stフルアルバム [Episodes-Merrow-]
SWMR-3 / 3500円(税込) 全限定1000枚
CD+DVD二枚組 在庫残少



GHOST HARLEM

creating a cool and mysterious dark atmosphere



WHEN IN JAPAN *HELKANEN* RAN INTO *GHOST HARLEM*, WHO'S MUSIC SHE LOVED SO MUCH WE SIMPLY HAD TO SPEAK TO THE BAND ABOUT WHAT DRIVES THEM.

By way of introduction, could you say something nice about the other members of the band?

Maho (vocals): I want to thank them because they usually accept my selfishness. Some are my respective favourites. But we're all alike in what can be regarded in us being cool.

Ginchang (guitar): Maho is generally rowdy. Kanon can in fact also play the piano and Kaname is bread *laughs*.

Kanon (bass): the other members of *GHOST HARLEM* are like family to me.

Kaname (drums): *GHOST HARLEM* is the monster band!

Your musical style is Neo Metal, why did you choose this particular kind of Metal to play? How would you describe the Metal scene in Japan and in your home town especially?

Ginchang: We are influenced by other bands and artists of the Japanese visual-kei underground scene. Other genres that inspire us in overseas bands are slash metal, death metal, hardcore, punk, rock and emo and various elements thereof. *GHOST HARLEM* sees this as a new opportunity within the metal genre and thus: Neo Metal. In the main Japanese scenes metal still isn't very famous but there are many Japanese that do like the genre. Which is clear because big festivals such as LOUD park and SUMMER SONIC, to name but a few do book many overseas artists.

Maho: We want to change the image that only metal fans listen to metal music.

Kanon: Our music is not common but still has a feeling of nostalgia. So, we used the phrase "NeoMetal" in that genre of new metal.

Kaname: We thought that if we were to further pursue possibilities of metal, we want to make the music like it's transmitted to a million people.

How did you come up with the name GHOST HARLEM?

Kanon: Inspiration just struck when thinking about the band name.

Maho: And we are a mixed-gender band so we wanted to create a cool and mysterious dark atmosphere.

BCM is a Belgian magazine, so of course we're curious to know, what do you guys know about Belgium? Aside from beer, waffles and chocolate? Have you ever visited the country?

Maho: We haven't gone to Belgium. In Japan Belgian waffles are very well known. The food of your country is very popular in ours. In the wake of this interview, I would like to know more of Belgium.

Kaname: I want to go to Belgium and spread our music because I think it would be great to take the music scene of Japan to Belgium.

Kanon: It's the birthplace of Audrey Hepburn. I think buildings in Belgium are very beautiful.

Ginchang: I don't know anything about Belgium except the waffles, chocolate and beer and I haven't gone to Belgium. In fact I've never travelled overseas.

Could you name the top three artists (working in any style or form of art) that have prominently influenced you and why?

Ginchang: Hide from *X Japan*, because of him I started playing the guitar. **ANCHANG** of *SEX MACHINEGUNS* because I'm considerably affected by his stage presence and playing style.

Kaname: We are inspired by the visual kei scene and metal.



Live photos from the *GHOST HARLEM* one man show "Dead or Death" at Shibuya Cyclone - Tokyo - Japan - Saturday, May 4th 2013. Photos by Helcanen (www.helcanen.be).

What kind of job would you be doing if you weren't making music?

Maho: I'd be an artist doing illustrations etc.

Ginchang: I'd probably be a factory worker.

Kanon: I never thought about it but I might have been a webdesigner.

Kaname: I'd work in a bakery.

What would you say is the band's greatest achievement so far and what is your biggest dream for GHOST HARLEM?

Kaname: Our oneman live on May 5th, that was very exciting.

Kanon: And we released our 3rd single on July 17.

Ginchang: my biggest dream is to perform at LOUD PARK and OZZFEST!

Maho: We really like those events.

Instruments are vital to an artist, what's your favourite piece of equipment that you own?

Maho: Only my body.

Ginchang: *BOSS SD-1*. The sound can be made into a very heavy impact one when I'm using the clean channel of a *Marshall JCM2000* drive. So I'm very pleased with what I have these days.

Kanon: My bass because the sound coming from it has a lot of power.

Kaname: My *Pearl* drums.

What are your plans with GHOST HARLEM for the immediate future? Any plans for a European tour?

Maho: We did a tour worthy of a band in the Japanese scene this summer, performing in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka to promote our 3rd single release. That was our first trial and it was a pleasure that we'd love to repeat. We've not got a European tour scheduled but we want to do that.

Ginchang: I would like to make a full album and a music video.

Do you have a message for your European fans?

Maho: Our music is good on CD but I want you to come to our lives! I look forward to the day we'll meet.

Ginchang: Hello, I am Ginchang. I'm the guitarist of *GHOST HARLEM*. I like to riot and headbang like crazy when playing my music!

Kanon: How do you do? And thank you so much to mind always. As we go there sure, we do our best.

Kaname: Nice to meet you, listen to your favorite music whenever you want, live a life without regrets!

Official website: <http://ghost-harlem.com>

Official Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GhostHarlem>

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by *GHOST HARLEM* (studio group shot) and *Helcanen* (live photos). Many thanks to *GHOST HARLEM* and *Helcanen*!



MY WAY MY LOVE IS BACK WITH A NEW ALBUM, THE FACT IS, A NEW SOUND AND A DESIRE TO TOUR THE GLOBE. ALL THE MORE REASONS TO SPEAK WITH FRONTMAN AND GUITARIST YUKIO MURATA AND TALK ABOUT THE MUSICAL CHANGES AND WHAT THE FACT IS EXACTLY. READ AND FIND OUT!

You have somewhat of a new sound on the new album *The Fact Is*. What brought on the evolution and why did you go for this particular sound?

With *my way my love*, I am always looking to explore new sounds. I did all the production on this album. I hadn't done much production work for about ten years and the sound just felt right to me. It's hard to explain why that is but I am very happy with the way this album sounds and feels.

How did you come up with the name for the album?

'*The Fact Is*', is a way people often begin a statement. I wanted each listener to add their own statement to the title.

my way my love is a Japanese band, yet the lyrics on *The Fact Is* are in English, why did you choose to sing in that particular language rather than Japanese?

English is a more direct language than Japanese and as I was composing the melodies I felt I wanted to express myself simply and directly and it felt right to use English to do this.

In the past you have often been compared to *Sonic Youth*, and you can clearly hear influences from bands like that still, but I can also hear a kind of avant-garde music into the songs, especially on *Beautiful Junkies* that was typical for Belgian alternative bands from the nineties. Yukio, I know you're a *Soulwax* fan, in how far has Belgian music influenced the making of this album?

I like *Sonic Youth*, *Soulwax* and many other bands. If a band is doing something interesting I don't think it matters where they come from.

The last song on the album, *The Last Apple on the tree*, is a remix of the third song of the album by Paper Bag Man, your U-re:x alter ego. Why remix that particular song?

I love that song and I wanted to try and take it somewhere else. Having an alter ego gives me the chance to do things that perhaps wouldn't be right for my way my love.

Could you share with us the most memorable thing that happened to you whilst recording *The Fact Is*?

Halfway through the recording my way my love celebrated their 12th anniversary. It was a beautiful day and by far the most memorable thing that happened during the recording of the album!

You're doing an extensive tour in Japan *The Fact Is VAMPIRE*, any chance you'll expand the tour to Europe? Which European countries and cities would you definitely want to perform in?

I would love to do a tour in Europe which would definitely include some dates in Belgium.

You're part of several projects, how do you keep all of those apart? Especially when creating music?

It is difficult at times but each project has its own feel and atmosphere and I am able to lose myself in each one.

The theme colour for our next edition is orange, what does that colour make you think of?

Orange makes me think of sunsets. It is a beautiful colour.

This edition of BCM is our Halloween edition, are you guys going to do something special for Halloween?

I will be dressed as a Vampire! Maybe I'll throw some candy into the audience *laughs*!

What's the fact according to my way my love?

The fact is we should all follow our hearts.

Any wisdom for our readers my way my love style?

The fact is my way my love loves you!

Official website: www.mywaymylove.com

Official twitter: twitter.com/mywaymylove

Official youtube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/mywaymylovetv

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photo by KANA TARUMI, taken during The Fact Is VAMPIRE tour final in Tokyo.
Many thanks to Yukio Murata!



A NEW CD, A NEW LOOK AND A NEW VOCAL STYLE.
THREE GOOD REASONS TO CATCH UP ANEW WITH
VISUAL-KEI BAND TOKAMI!

Agato, you have recently made some changes to your vocal style on SYNCHRONICITY, what brought those about?

Agato (vocals): I felt that with the changes in my vocal style the image and sound of the band would become more powerful.

With the new EP out, are there any plans for a European tour?

1000 (drums): We don't have it scheduled at the moment but we're waiting on the offer for a short tour.

How would you describe the musical evolution of Tokami since the very beginning of the band 'till now?

K (guitar): I've always liked the rock music of overseas bands and artists like *Whitesnake*, *Ozzy Osborne*, *KISS* and *Alice Cooper*, to name but a few. So originally I didn't know a lot about Japanese visual-kei music. But by playing guitar for Tokami I was able to exploit all of it musically. As an example: I don't think I would have been able to make music such as *The under of garden* with just my past musical knowledge, I needed everything.

You're signed to Starwave Records, of which the artists often collaborate. Who from the label would you like to work with, and on what kind of project?

1000: I'd love to shoot a short film with *Hibiki* from *Calmando Qual*. Of course he'd be the leading actor.

What's the nicest thing you've ever received from a fan?

Agato: I got some very nice underwear briefs *laughs*.

This edition's theme colour is orange, what does that mean to you?

Ichika (bass): I like orange juice!

This BCM is our annual Halloween edition, will Tokami do something special for Halloween?

Ichika: you have a Halloween edition? Congratulations! We're playing a live in Sendai that day. I'm thinking I should perform wearing a costume.

What do you hope to inspire most in those listening to your music?

K: I'm not really hoping for anything like that, just that people listen to our music and like it.

Agato, as a vocalist you are often compared to Asagi from D, even though you are different in your own right, how do you feel about that comparison?

I have no feelings on the matter, I like Asagi from D. He's an artist and an expert in that specific style. I am a little influenced by him, but I don't think I want to express that influence in my own band.

When we spoke last you pointed out the Gothic horror feel to Tokami, which work of horror inspires you the most for your music?

Agato: The movies I like best are *Interview with the Vampire* and *Sleepy Hollow*. The Gothic horror influences in our music come from those two films.

What are Tokami's plans for the rest of 2013?

1000: We decided on a one man show for December 2nd. The sale of our new CD will also start then.

Interview by Gloria and Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Akio Yokoyama.
Many thanks to Tokami and Kiwamu Kai.

Official website: <http://tokami.heavy.jp>

Official facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tokamiofficial>



JAPANESE GOTHIC METAL BAND ELEANOR IS SOON TO GRACE THE BELGIAN STAGE AT THE ANNUAL FEMALE METAL VOICES FESTIVAL IN WIEZE ON OCTOBER 20TH.

FURTHERMORE THEY RELEASED THEIR 2ND FULL ALBUM BREATHE LIFE INTO THE ESSENCE EARLIER THIS YEAR. BCM SPOKE TO GUITARIST IPPEI OVER EMAIL IN EXPECTATION OF THEIR UPCOMING BELGIAN LIVE.

If you had to introduce the music of eleanor to someone who doesn't know it yet with just 1 of your songs, which song would you choose?

Hi, I'm Ippei, the guitarist of eleanor. Thank you for the opportunity to be interviewed. I would ask to first listen to *Fatal Movement* for which we made an official music video that you can easily watch on youtube.

What made you choose eleanor as a band name? Is there a special woman called Eleanor to the band?

We took it from the song *Eleanor* by a gothic metal band from The Netherlands: *The Gathering*. Because the band is one of our origins and I especially like the song. Also because it is a name familiar all around the world.

You're performing at Metal Female Voices Fest (MFVF) later this year, how did you end up on the line-up of that festival?

It is thanks to the sponsor who replied to our approach. Since we had just released a new album this year, we thought it the best timing to perform overseas as well.

Which artists do you hope to see live yourself at MFVF?

Since most of the artists have never come to Japan, I'm looking forward to seeing them all alike, but one I particularly have feelings for and would love to see is *Anneke*. When she is on stage I'm pretty sure that I will watch as a simple fan, while temporarily forgetting I am also going to perform.

Which European metal bands are an inspiration for you?

I myself have been influenced by many bands from Europe: *Sentenced*, *Amorphis*, *Swallow the Sun*, *Anathema*, *Emperor*, *The Gathering*, *Katatonia*, and many others.

Will it be your only overseas concert, or are you going to do a full European tour?

This time we are only planning to perform at the festival.

Will it be your first trip to Belgium?

I myself have privately travelled to Belgium some ten years ago. After that trip, and until this day, I have kept a very positive impression of the country and have always wanted to go back some day. That wish has been granted. But I had never expected that I would return to perform a live. I was previously playing in a hard core type band. I wonder if you have heard of the Belgian band *AGATHOCLES*? They're probably still in activity. I have released a split/EP with the band. So, for me personally Belgium is a country that I feel a strong sense of affinity with.

What do you look forward the most about your upcoming Belgian concert?

To be able to perform in itself, moreover the opportunity to be able to play besides the numerous big artists is one aspect we look forward to, and will obviously enjoy. But we also hope that this will become a chance to expand our activity abroad. And we, of course, intend to do our best to make this happen.

The music of eleanor is generally seen as Gothic metal, why did you choose this genre specifically?

When thinking of words that would express eleanor to people who have never heard of us, we called ourselves a melancholic Gothic metal band because we thought it a simple way to appeal our existence. In spite of the fact that we call ourselves a Gothic metal band, it is difficult to say whether that is an accurate expression. We ourselves admit that we have slightly diverted from the course of Gothic metal. However, the Gothic metal fans in Japan have still always given us warm support, and we perform regularly at an event in Tokyo called *GOthic METAL GODDESS*. Moreover, Eleanor has been influenced by Gothic metal and bands that have passed through the genre or participate actively in the Gothic metal scene.

Your latest album is called *Breathe Life into the Essence*, how did you come up with the title?

The whole process was exactly like breathing life into the elements of words and emotions that were essential for creating the songs. Also, since our 1st album was titled *a circle of lament*, starting with an A, we wanted this one to be titled beginning with a B. We took this method from the American death metal band *MORBID ANGEL*, and their style of titling albums.

How would you say that the music of eleanor has evolved since the band was started in 2005?

There have been advancements in recording techniques, and we have improved our sound production. On the 1st album almost all lyrics were done in English, whereas on our new one all lyrics are written in Japanese. We take this positively, since no other bands are doing this. We always want to be an evolving presence. Many people have commented that we have improved drastically since our 1st release, however we are not yet in a position to say ourselves that we have actually evolved. In order to achieve such a stage there still seems to be a long way to go.

You're from Osaka, a town that is often in the news in Belgium due to the mayor forbidding things like dancing after a certain hour. How does his rule afflict the local metal scene?

Of course, we are quite aware of that news, but presently it has no influence on the metal scene here. It has not turned into a state where the activity of metal bands are hindered.

The theme colour for our next edition is orange, what does orange mean to you?

It attracts attention. Makes you alert. It has a bright, open feel. Our music is not quite such a bright, cheerful style like the colour, but we do want to attract the interest of as many as possible through it.

Any message for your European fans?

We are all very happy to have the opportunity to obtain a link with the European fans by performing at MFVF and through this interview. Surely, eleanor will be able to play to you all music that you have never heard before. We are sincerely looking forward to meeting you all this coming October.

Website: www.eleanorjapan.com

Fatal Movement PV: <http://youtu.be/f1EoPuREGxo>

eleanor is:

Vocals: Shiori Vitus

Guitar: Ippei J Malmsteen and Nao

Bass: Takahiro Chihara

Drums: Shark

Backing vocals and percussion: Jet Rumi

eleanor live in Belgium:

Metal Female Voices Fest

Oktoberhallen - Wieze

Sunday, October 20

www.metalfemalevoicesfest.be





THE BEST OF EAST MEETS WEST IN THE DARK AND ATMOSPHERIC MUSIC OF GLORIA IN EXCELSIS. PROVING YOU NEED NOT BE BASED IN JAPAN TO MAKE EXCELLENT VISUAL-KEI MUSIC, GLORIA IN EXCELSIS RELEASED HER FIRST SINGLE, *CAGE*, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND JAPANESE FOR FREE IN DIGITAL FORMAT. WE SPOKE TO HER TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS BELGIAN BASED JAPANESE MUSIC PROJECT FROM A TALENTED ARTIST FROM OUR OWN COUNTRY.

You're Belgian, what inspired you to start singing in Japanese?

I was already singing in Japanese with my ex-band *Guren* few years ago. In the beginning, we started with Japanese music covers. I enjoyed singing in Japanese, it was so much more different from French or English and easier for me. I really don't know why, probably because of my Italian roots?

***Cage* is a metal style single, why did you choose this musical genre in particular?**

I love rough sounds. Actually, for some people, it sounds more visual kei than metal. A few months ago, I played the instrumental of *Cage* to a visual kei friend. I had said nothing about music style. His first reaction was: "Is it visual kei?!". The vocal melody in some places is pretty metal. I like mixing both, that's what Gloria in Excelsis is about!

Before your solo project you were the vocalist of *Guren*, how would you say your vocal style and music has evolved since then?

I think that the fans and people who followed us at that time will find a difference. I evolved as a singer, my voice is more trained now and I can show a different range of what I can do technically. I'm not a professional, I learned everything by myself. I'm not a typical metal female singer, I use lots of screams and clean voice. Musically, it's totally different from *Guren*, in a more hardcore way and more melodic probably.

What do you think are the biggest advantages and disadvantages about being a VK artist not based in Japan?

A few years ago, European VK bands were popular, this period is over now. I don't consider myself a visual kei artist properly. For me, visual kei belongs to Japanese culture. I'm a fronted metal female. If the pu-

blic or the press want to put myself in that category, I'm fine with that. In Europe it's always difficult and it's not necessarily better in Japan so you must show what you got! That's why I decided to also sing in English, I prefer to take to the metal scene in Europe. I want to bring the sound of VK to an audience who is often closed to the idea to see guys wearing makeup and skirts. I'm a girl so it's different. In Japan it will be even harder. Precisely the fact that I'm a girl and a *gaijin* can be a problem at first. You should know that the Japanese audience consists up to 99% of girls. But I'm not afraid, I'll convince them to support me!

How did you first become interested in Japanese culture and music?

I started out like almost everyone, I fell in love with Japanese culture thanks to anime. After that, my interest for J-music started to grow day after day. I'm not only a VK fan, I also love J-pop, I'm a big *Koda Kumi* fan *laughs*. I'm an eclectic person.

You also work for *Starwave Records*, running their European fan Facebook amongst other things. Which 5 *Starwave Records* artists would you like to work with, or work with again if you had the opportunity and what kind of project would you do together?

Woah, that question! If *Kiwamu* reads this, he will laugh for sure *laughs*!

The first band is undoubtedly *Misaruka*. I worked for them as a narrative voice for the single *Juliet* and the upcoming *Rasen*. Singing with *rui* would be an honour for me even if I already had the opportunity but not in concert/studio. He has an incredible talent, a huge vocal power and we're pretty much in the same range. I'm sure we could have fun together. Probably a sad love song on piano with some violins. But I think that *rui* would be more interested in something different from what he does, a song which he can be more hardcore.

The second is *Tokami*. I also have lot of respect for *Agato* as a singer. He also has an amazing talent and a great voice, even if I can't sing like him, he has a deep voice. I'm not a fan of the risks he took on 憂鬱なる不確かな明日、微笑みの先についた嘘 but a duet with *Agato* on vocals and me on screams seems interesting. I love the dark atmosphere of *Tokami*.

The third is *Synk;yet*. Another *Starwave Records* band that I love. *Liki* is also an amazing singer. He has evolved a lot in one year. I think he has the most powerful voice of the label. I don't know what to do with him, there are so many possibilities, but singing *Messiah* or to *Mother* together one day would be nice or doing vocal harmonies on one of his songs.

The fourth is *Capella*. I love their "funny" atmosphere, it really differs from what I usually do. *Bon* is also a very good singer! Mixing our different universes would be so strange. Can you imagine for one second me next to *peko* on stage? *Laughs* it'd be an ...odd moment! Don't get me wrong, I don't laugh at *peko*, he's a nice guy just like the other *Capella* members!

I can't choose more than five bands so the fifth will be *Calmando Qual*. They have a very special and strange atmosphere, a bit like me for the creepy part, but not in the same style. I think we could find interesting things to do together.



“proud to be belgian...”

You're first and foremost a metal artist, how would you compare the Belgian metal scene to the one in Japan?

To tell you the truth, I don't know much about the metal scene in Japan unlike the visual kei. During my last trip to Tokyo I had the opportunity to visit the *Crescendo* live house. It seems that this is an important place for the Japanese metal scene. The audience was very enthusiastic despite the different styles played that night. The metal audience is the opposite of visual kei one, people will support you even if they don't know you and that's great! They're more open-minded. When you're on stage and no one approaches you because they don't know you, that's a pity! It's always like that with the visual kei audience. You kinda feel alone.

Could you tell us a little more about your upcoming maxi single as a sneak peak?

Of course! I've been a big fan of history, religions, the paranormal and the occult since my childhood. *Opus Dei* tells the story of an angel who has committed the sin of loving and was sent to hell. *Cage* is a small part of the scenario and one of the most gentle songs. The maxi-single will contain no break between tracks, everything will be connected by interludes.

Last Made in Asia you had a stand selling CDs, will we be able to buy the CD version of your upcoming maxi single at events in Belgium later this year?

I hope the maxi single will be released on October 18th at the *Metal Female Voices Festival* (editor: for more information about this event check their site www.metalfemalevoicesfest.be). In any case, I'll have a booth over there. I'll try to be at *Japan Expo Belgium* and also at *Made in Asia* next year. I must be everywhere to promote my project!

Editor: Gloria will also be present at Kamecon, sharing a booth with Helcanen on September 22.

You're still looking for band members, what qualities does a musician need to have, aside from skill on their instrument of course, to qualify for playing with you?

That's a good question. First of all, they must be convinced by my project and must love what they hear. But yeah, I think they must have a certain level of skill to play my songs. If you listen carefully, you'll understand the complexity. Although for an experienced musician, it will be easy to reproduce. I'm unable to do that. They also need to love being on stage and give 100% to the audience. The show is something very important to me as this is where Gloria in Excelsis will come to life.

Which thing that Japan is famous for do you wish Belgium was famous for instead of the general "beer, chocolate and waffles" the country is known for now?

Gosh, I don't know. One day, I really want to say that Belgium is a safe country like Japan. I feel good in Tokyo, I'm not stressed and worried about being attacked or raped! I live in Charleroi (editor: one of the Belgian towns sadly known for its high crime rate and socio-economic issues a plenty), so you'll understand what I mean! You can do everything you want, be who you want, nobody cares, I really want that mood in Belgium too.

Any message for our readers as a closing note?

Firstly, a big thanks to Hilde for making this interview possible. I hope the readers will take the time to read my answers. I'm proud to be Belgian and to claim that my project is 100% Belgian homemade without huge equipment. I want to represent you the best as I can in both Europe and Japan. I don't pretend to be rich and sign in a label without any effort. With your support I will. Please download *Cage*, enjoy it and if you like what you hear, join my world!

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography (but not the final edit) by Helcanen (www.helcanen.be).
Check our J-music Corner for a review of *Cage*!

Find Gloria in Excelsis online:

Free download of the single *Cage*:
soundcloud.com/gloria-in-excelsis

Facebook:

facebook.com/gloria.in.excelsis.solo

Official project Facebook:

facebook.com/Gloria.in.excelsis.official

Twitter: twitter.com/Gloria_Vo

Tumblr: gloraiexcelsisproject.tumblr.com

Instagram: [gloria_in_excelsis](https://instagram.com/gloria_in_excelsis)

Ameba: profile.ameba.jp/gloria-in-excelsis

Email: gloria.in.excelsis.solo@gmail.com



angela was one of the many bands performing at last July's edition of *Japan Expo*, performing in France for the very first time, but aside from that, they are also the duo behind many popular anime theme and end songs, high time to talk to them about their new album **ZERO**, which is available in Europe via digital download and stream, amongst other things.

Congratulations on your 10 year anniversary! How would you say your personal style as musicians, as well as the sound of *angela*, has evolved since 2003?

atsuko: Thank you very much. We have become what we are today after a process of trial and error since 10 years ago, where we knew nothing and just worked furiously. I think my singing now became better than before without losing my distinctive style. I also try to have the lyrics simply speak to the listeners.

KATSU: I think the techniques and ability of singing can be improved accordingly when you keep trying, but the thing is always challenging the experiment of new things. If you fail, you just break it down and recreate from scratch. I am grateful for being provided such an environment.

Your new album **ZERO has a great balance of unique style and technological skill. Can you touch on your tools and process for your work, and how you find that balance?**

atsuko: Since there is a variety of types of songs on the album, the character of each track also varies. I knew from the beginning that the songs related to *K* are included on the album. Because those songs are rock-oriented, we played and tried many things with other tracks besides the *K* related ones.

KATSU: I adhere to capture the good things of both analog and digital. It is difficult to tell engineers about the sound I image and the sound that blows around in my head with words. So I generally hand over the materials to engineers and ask them to mix them, after I elaborately craft the sound by myself as much as possible. As for equipment, I select equipment to use depending on type of tracks, but usually I discuss them with music stores which support us and we'll select appropriate equipment together.

You recently were at *Japan Expo* for a concert and your new album **ZERO is released in Europe on digital format, are there any plans for a more extensive European tour in the future?**

atsuko: There aren't any plans for an European tour so far, but I really want to do that!!!

KATSU: There were lots of things that I gained inspiration from at *Japan Expo*. I would love to do the European tour if we have support and encouragements!!!

Were you able to do some sightseeing in Paris? If so, what left the biggest impression on you?

atsuko: I had the chance to do some sightseeing on the last day of our stay. I walked around in Paris and took a metro to get to *Notre Dame Cathedral*. I felt cleansed by the magnificent atmosphere of the cathedral. I also went to a church in the *Saint-Germain* area, ate ice cream, and so on. I pretty much enjoyed Paris and being a Parisienne for a whole day.

KATSU: The upcoming maxi single *Tokumade* features an accordion sound as I was impressed by street musicians performing besides the river *Seine*. The music I heard, the scenery I saw and the town I walked in at that time are all very precious to me.

Whilst at *Japan Expo* you also held an autograph session where you met fans. Which fan stood out the most to you and why?

atsuko: I was really impressed as there were many fans coming to our autograph session, who were cosplaying characters from *K* and *FAFNER in the azure*. I was also touched by their effort of trying hard to address their messages to us in Japanese.

KATSU: I was very happy that I could meet a lot of fans who cosplayed characters from the animation *K* for which *angela* handles the music.

How do you prepare specifically for concerts outside of Japan? Are the preparations very different to those for lives in Japan?

atsuko: Only difference of the lives outside of Japan from the lives in Japan is just the setlist. We try to put more anime theme songs in the setlist of the concerts outside of Japan. Other than that, basically there aren't any differences. But when I communicate with the audience yelling things like "*sing together!*" or "*are you having good time?*", I want



to say these phrases in local languages. So I work hard to learn these phrases in local languages when performing overseas.

KATSU: I try to do the same performance as we do in Japan for the concerts outside of Japan. Also, I want to communicate with the audience in their local languages as much as possible.

Your current look is very steampunk, were you very involved in the design of your outfits? What kind of stage costume would you still like to wear one day?

atsuko: We always discuss stage costume with our stylist. A completed costume is always brilliant. That it is beyond the reach of my imagination, so I am really happy beyond expression to wear them. I would like to wear outfits in a Japanese style in the future.

KATSU: We change our stage costumes depending on theme of every concert. I love the worldview of steampunk, and I am interested in trying angela in *Cyber*, *Trancey* & *Digital* style next time.

You often make music for anime, how do you generally get involved in a project and how do you go about composing music for an animation project?

atsuko: If there is an original work for an anime, I read the novels and manga to find out more about the universe of the story. If the anime itself is the original, I try to read the scenario and model sheet in dept and then discuss musical direction with the producer. And then we get cracking on the production.

KATSU: A theme song is the "introduction to the perspective of the world", and an end theme is the "overview", which are what I keep in mind when we make music for anime. I try to obtain any scrap of information from people involved in the anime, in order to be inspired. We make about 15-16 demo tracks for one piece of work, then select some tracks and polish them up from there.

You are writing music for the upcoming anime *COPPELION*, in which Tokyo has fallen victim to a nuclear disaster in the future. Something which is hitting very close to home due to problems with nuclear power a lot of countries are facing. Is this an issue you worry about yourself?

atsuko: If there were not that the *Great East Japan Earthquake* occurred in 2011, I would have thought that the universe of the story is just

fiction, however, such a catastrophe happened in reality, so there were lots of things that I contemplated. The matter of nuclear power is certainly a difficult subject, but I think we are the generation who needs to think about the alternative energy resources such as wind electricity or geothermal energy, which do not have such a high risk and where we can live eco-friendly, even though it involves enormous cost to develop such alternative energy.

KATSU: Is this an issue I worry about myself? Yes of course! I studied about nuclear power and radioactivity as I got involved with *COPPELION*. This anime brings up number of issues which Japan is currently facing. I think *COPPELION* is greatly beyond being just entertainment and a recreational anime. So, I put a lot of messages into this anime.

Do you have a message for your European fans in parting?

atsuko: We had a live performance in July 2013 in France for the first time in my life! What I felt is that there is no national border for the people who like anime. Personally, I love the historical architecture in Europe, so I want to stay in Europe longer and more slower-paced for the next time. We will keep making many songs in Japan, as we will be able to do tour in Europe some day. Looking forward to seeing you!

KATSU: Hi, this is KATSU from angela. Thank you very much for loving Japanese anime. I love Japanese anime about as much as you love it. There are many voice actors/actresses, directors and staff who cannot go overseas because they are too busy, though they want to go there. *angela* will carry all the feelings of those people, to see you some day for sure!!

Find angela online:

Official site: <http://style-market.com/angela>

angela on Star Child: <http://www.starchild.co.jp/artist/angela>

Ameba: <http://ameblo.jp/angela-official>

atsuko's twitter: twitter.com/angela_atsuko

KATSU's twitter: twitter.com/angela_sts

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photos provided by King Records.
Many thanks to angela and King Records!





CUPCAKE FOCUS:

Margot

MARGOT IS ONE OF THE FOREVER STYLISCH CLASSIC LOLITAS THAT HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE BELGIAN COMMUNITY FOR THE LONGEST. ASIDE FROM THAT SHE'S ALSO A VERY TALENTED ARTIST, WHO'S ART YOU CAN ADMIRE IN THE CURRENT AND PREVIOUS EDITION OF BCM. TO NAME BUT TWO PLACES. SO WITHOUT MUCH FURTHER ADO: GET TO KNOW HER A LITTLE BETTER THROUGH THIS INTERVIEW!

What first got you interested in Lolita fashion?

Some of my friends started wearing *Sweet* and *Gothic Lolita*, and while I thought that was super cute it wasn't until I discovered the classic side that I fell in love.

You've been part of the scene for several years, how would you describe the evolution of the Belgian Lolita scene and your own personal style throughout those years?

A lot of people came and went, I feel like the group right now is less tight knit and more spread out. Which isn't a bad thing, you have a lot of people doing their own thing. My style became more personal and experimental. In the beginning I was still exploring the basics of Lolita, but now I'm not afraid to mix it up.

What influences you the most for your Lolita style and putting together coords?

I'm often inspired by vintage items. I love mixing old jewellery and accessories with Lolita. They give outfits a special, dreamy feeling.



You also wear other J-fashion styles, which are your favourites and why?

I've always loved *mori girl* and *dolly-kei*, and lately I've been getting into *cult party kei* as well. They all involve layering, combining second hand with handmade items and creating a whole new look which I love. To me they all feel similar to Lolita and are easily combined.

Is there a Lolita or J-fashion style you'd still like to try one day?

Some styles I'd like to try are *Sweet Lolita*, *fairy-kei* and *creepy cute*. I love the sweet, girly look, but I'm a bit scared to try it myself. I'm so familiar with Classic, and while I'm dabbling in Sweet it would take a lot more work to make a full on sweet outfit. Maybe someday!

You're also into several fandoms and have been known to make some awesome fandom Lolita outfits, which fandom(s) would you still like to incorporate into an outfit and how would that look?

I'm not sure if it's considered a fandom or not, but I adore fairy tales. I would love to create outfits based on the heroines of my favourite stories! It would be a complete dream to create my own prints based on stories such as *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats* and *Frau Holle* for example.

Aside from being a fashionista you're also a talented artist, in how far does Japanese fashion and culture influence your art?

Thank you! Fashion definitely influences my works. To me, there's no difference between the outfits I wear, the pictures I draw or the accessories I make. I'm trying to convey the same feeling through it all.

You were part of Bows and Apples as a vendor at MiA this year, is there any chance you will start selling your designs online any time soon?

That's probably not going to happen soon. I know my own limits, and I don't think I'm quite ready for something like that yet. Most of the items I make are just things I'd like to wear myself. If other people are interested in them, that's great! But going commercial right now is not one of my priorities. People can email me about art commissions though.

What advice would you give to Lolitas just starting out with the fashion?

Start with the basics. I think to really find your own style you've got to get the basics down first. A nice blouse, skirt or jumperskirt and a petticoat. Everything else, such as shoes, tights or socks, a purse and headgear can be from normal shops at first. And go thrift shopping! You never know what perfect pieces are hiding near you.

Interview and photography by Hilde Heyvaert.

Find Margot online:

<http://fishisnotagirlsname.tumblr.com>

For art commissions you can reach Margot at bircka@hotmail.com

in a nutshell

Name: Margot

Forum nick: fish

Age: 22

Styles: Classic Lolita, *mori girl*, *dolly-kei* and *cult party kei*.

Favourite brands: Innocent World and everything vintage!

Wearing Lolita fashion since: around 2009
I think?



**CHARACTER CENTRAL ABOUT THE
TOKYO DISNEY RESORT**

DAN BRACE AND JON FIEDLER HAVE BEEN TRAVELLING THE WORLD, VISITING ALL DISNEY PARKS AND PHOTOGRAPHING CHARACTERS, EVENTS, RIDES AND WHAT ELSE GOING ON YOU CAN THINK OF WITH VIM AND VIGOUR TO THEN COMPILE THE BEST OF IT WITH ALL RELEVANT INFO ON THEIR WEBSITE WWW.CHARACTERCENTRAL.NET.

HAVING VISITED TOKYO DISNEY RESORT SEVERAL TIMES, COMBINED WITH THEIR EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE ON DISNEY TRAVEL, WE SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT DISNEY IN JAPAN AND THE COUNTRY'S PARKS.

Abbreviations used when talking about Tokyo Disney:

TDR: Tokyo Disney Resort, which encompasses the whole complex of parks, hotels, and everything else part of Tokyo Disney.

TDL: Tokyo Disneyland.

TDS: Tokyo Disney Sea.

You guys run Character Central, could you introduce the site to people that don't know it yet?

Character Central is a website dedicated to Disney characters that appear at the Disney parks, resorts and also the Cruise Line and other places, but you get the idea. We have the largest library of characters on the internet, and probably the most pictures of the Disney Parks of any website. We have a blog, forum and other interactive features.

You run your own site, but which other Disney sites, be they official or fan made, are your personal favourites?

DLRPMagic.com and Yesterland.com.

What's the best and the worst about running a Disney fan site?

The best part is being able to share our vast knowledge and experience with others, interact and generally have fun with people who enjoy the same things as you. The worst part is keeping it maintained and up to date. It just takes so much time and energy, which we don't always have!

If you had to describe the Tokyo Disney Resort in 5 words, which would those be?

Ok, we actually seriously tried to answer this question but found it virtually impossible. The two theme parks are so wildly different from one another, and offer such different experiences, that one word to describe one park, is not accurate for the other. TDR is a diverse place, but one that, like other Disney Parks, has its good points, and bad points.

You've been to literally every Disney park in the world, several times, how would you say Tokyo Disney compares to the other parks, and to the European Disneyland Paris especially?

Tokyo Disney Resort feels similar, but it is drastically different. TDL feels like a *Magic Kingdom* (editor: The Magic Kingdom is part of Walt Disney World) park, but is on a completely different plain of existence to the others. There are similar attractions and experiences. The characters are the same of course. But there is something at its core that makes it a different place. TDS is unlike anything you can ever imagine, and cannot be compared to any other Disney Park, or any other theme park in the world. TDS doesn't always feel like Disney to us, but is uniquely Disney too at the same time.



As a whole, the resort feels different simply because of its setting and the culture that exists around it. As I said above, TDR has good points and bad points, just as all the parks do. To list them all would take me all day and night!

Would you say that there is a huge cultural difference between the Japanese parks and the other ones?

TDR by far has the most hard core fans you'll ever see in your life. Their obsessions with the characters and anything cute borders on maniacal. They are unrivalled in their ability to wait tens of hours on end, literally for shows and parades. If you see something in a store that you like, buy it. You'll never see it again otherwise! The Japanese buy the merchandise like their lives depended on it!

What would you say is the best and the worst about Tokyo Disney?

The best part is definitely how different it is from anywhere else. The variety of merchandise, the spectacular entertainment and just how unique it all feels are reasons to visit. The worst part is the crowds, bar none. Wall to wall people who run, no travel warp speed, from place to place and wait for hours on end for a parade. They're in a league of their own! A close second is their ridiculous photography rules. No pictures in queues, attractions, certain shows, and even when meeting characters that have queues. I'll elaborate more in the character specific question further down with my expanded answer on this.

Other than planning ahead and reading the trip planner on your site, what would you advise to people wanting to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort? Are there things they should definitely keep in mind?

Be prepared for long waits for anything. Always carry cash. The myth that Japan is the most advanced nation on Earth doesn't seem to apply to anything we have ever done on our three trips there! Do NOT visit in the summer. You will die. Between the humidity, the intense crowds, long waits and zero air conditioning. Did I mention they aren't the most advanced country?!... You will keel over (editor: keeling over is British slang for fainting) before the day is out. We did it once. Never again.

This is a question a lot of people wonder about: if you don't speak Japanese, will you be able to get around in TDR?

Most things in Japan have English subtitles or translations. The TDR theme parks are easily navigable and self-explanatory.

From a character hunting perspective, how would you say things are arranged in Japan vs the other parks?

Here's how it is in Florida (editor: Walt Disney World): you have a queue. For any character. The problem is, those characters are the same characters you've seen a million times. Florida never does anything different.

In California (editor: Disneyland Resort in Anaheim) they have even fewer characters. Most have queues. Some random ones don't.

At both US resorts you'll be able to meet the character you wait for fairly easily. Queue lengths and thus waiting times can vary.

In Hong Kong they have even less characters, and nearly all have queues. Not very long queues at that.

In *Paris*, the concept of a queue is virtually non-existent, and you can expect to be pushed and shoved, and possibly get in a fight with some rude Spanish woman before you meet the character. But they have good variety and awesome outfits. Better than the US in any case.

At all of the above you are always free to interact and take pictures. Then we come to *Tokyo*... The characters they have are fairly standard, but they are out all the time, and all over the parks. They also have some very cool outfits for the characters. It's not so much the diversity in which characters they have that makes character hunting interesting, but the volume of them, and at how many different locations you can meet the same character in a different outfit! Some have queues. Very, very long queues. Some are free roaming. They get mobbed as much as anywhere else. In fact, you'll see the Japanese hitting, tapping, grabbing and generally harassing the characters when they are free roaming, on a scale I've not seen at the other parks. When you queue up expect to wait forever, and when you get to the front, you will be forced to get one group shot with your whole party, on one camera. You will be forced out of the door. Rules are very strict, and unaccommodating. Be prepared to be very frustrated with meeting characters in Tokyo!

Which rides are absolute musts and favourites for you?

Pooh's Hunny Hunt, Splash Mountain, Sindbad's Storybook Voyage, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and The Enchanted Tiki Room: Stitch Presents Aloha E Komo Mai!

In Japan Disney is pretty much a cultural phenomenon, is this something you noticed during your stays in the country? If so, how?

Disney is everywhere! Most regular stores stock licensed Disney merchandise, and there is a whole district downtown in Tokyo that has stores stuffed full with Disney and other licensed character merchandise. If it's cute, it's big in Japan!

This issue is our *Halloween* edition, what can you guys tell us about Halloween in the Tokyo Disney Resort from your personal experience? And what's your favourite TDR Halloween thing, event and character?

Tokyo has some interesting Halloween entertainment, albeit limited. Each park features either just one show or parade, and some decorations, and that's about it. Of the two main events when we went last year, I really liked the *Halloween Street Welcome to Spookyville* parade the best. The other was a show in TDS. TDR do not really have seasonal characters, usually just *Duffy* and *Shellie-May*, in different outfits. So by default I guess that makes them our favourite ones to visit!

What can we expect from Character Central in the near future?

Oh gosh, we have a lot of ideas. The biggest problem, as I said at the start, is time. We want to add more interactivity, more of the interactive trip planners, and of course fully update all the character and location pages. But it'll take a while!

Do you have any Disney related wisdom to impart on our readers?

Enjoy the parks for what they are as individual places. Of course you can read my opinions, and those of others, but it's best to make your own judgements. On saying that, try not to compare too much either. Each park has its good points, and its bad points. There are things we love and dislike about all the Disney parks. In the end, just go with it, and have fun. After all, that's why you're visiting, right?!

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Dan Brace and Jon Fiedler.

FIND CHARACTER CENTRAL ONLINE:

Website: www.charactercentral.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CharacterCentral

Twitter: twitter.com/DisCharCentral

Dan's flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/theverynk/

Jon's flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/peterpanfan1953/





GUESTS

Dressing up is allowed for visitors of all ages in the Tokyo Disney parks all year 'round.



Photo by Jon Fiedler
www.charactercentral.net



Photo by Jon Fiedler
www.charactercentral.net

CHARACTERS

Clockwise from the top left:
Duffy and Shelley-May, Disney characters that originated in Tokyo Disney Sea
Minnie Mouse
The Big Bad Wolf



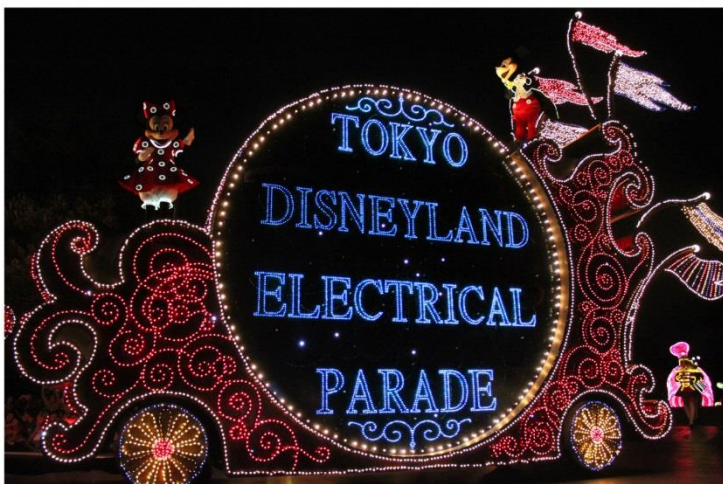
FOOD AND DRINKS



RIDES

Clockwise from the top left:

Chip 'n Dale's treehouse - Toontown - Tokyo Disneyland
Sindbad's Storybook Voyage - Arabian Coast - Tokyo Disney Sea
Journey to the Center of the Earth - Mysterious Island - Tokyo Disney Sea
Haunted Mansion Holiday - Fantasyland - Tokyo Disneyland
Pirates of the Caribbean - Adventureland - Tokyo Disneyland



SHOWS AND PARADES

Clockwise from the top left:

Disney's Halloween Street "Welcome to Spookyville" - Tokyo Disneyland

30th anniversary parade "Happyness is Here" - Tokyo Disneyland

30th anniversary parade "Happyness is Here" - Tokyo Disneyland

The Legend of Mythica - Mediterranean Harbor - Tokyo Disney Sea

Fantasmic - Tokyo Disney Sea

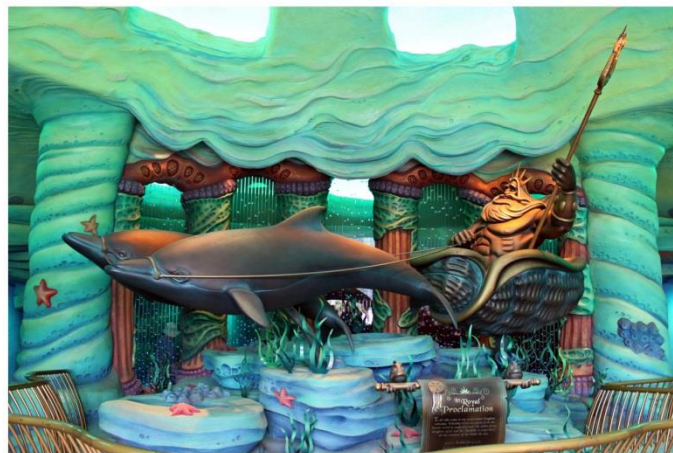
Tokyo Disneyland Electrical Parade "Dreamlights" - Tokyo Disneyland

A Table is Waiting - American Waterfront - Tokyo Disney Sea



SIGHTS & ATMOSPHERE

Clockwise from the top left:
 The Bicycle Piano - World Bazaar - Tokyo Disneyland
 Lost River Delta - Tokyo Disney Sea
 Tomorrowland - Tokyo Disneyland
 Toy Story Midway Mania at night - American Waterfront - Tokyo Disney Sea
 Lost River Delta - Tokyo Disney Sea



Clockwise from the top left:
 Adventureland - Tokyo Disneyland
 Fortress Explorations - Mediterranean Harbor - Tokyo Disney Sea
 The Nautilus - Mysterious Island - Tokyo Disney Sea
 The Sleepy Whale Shoppe - Mermaid Lagoon - Tokyo Disney Sea
 Mermaid Lagoon - Tokyo Disney Sea



HALLOWEEN



BOY GIRL





LUNIE, ONE OF EUROPE'S BEST KNOWN AND MOST POPULAR J-FASHION AND LOLITA FASHIONISTAS HAS RECENTLY DEBUTED HER OWN SHOP, **LUNIESHOP**, AT *JAPAN EXPO* NEAR PARIS IN NOT SO SNEAK PEAK OF WHAT WILL SOON BE ON OFFER AT HER WEBSHOP. WANTING TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THIS AWESOME VENTURE WE SPOKE TO LUNIE ABOUT HER UPCOMING SHOP FOR AWESOME CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES FROM JAPAN.

First things first, what made you fall in love with Japanese fashion, and which was the first style you started wearing?

I came across photos on the internet a very, very long time ago. I was pretty young still and thought the prices were exuberant and was pleased just admiring everything from a distance. Sometime later, I started wearing *Lolita*, *Sweet* and *OTT Sweet*!

Do you think your visits to Japan have influenced your style? How so?

Oh yes quite significantly. It has made me even more of an addict and it gave me the desire to try other styles! Especially *aomoji kei*, which I saw all over the streets of *Harajuku* *smiles*.

What inspired you to start LunieShop?

Towards the end of my studies I started working at *Zara* to earn a little extra money whilst awaiting the end of the year. I really liked working there as I learned a lot and it really made me want to turn my passion into my job.

Aside from a website and facebook and you blogging on livejournal, will there be a physical store? Or will we only be able to shop from you in person at events?

I'm thinking of maybe starting physical stores if everything works out really, really well, but it will be something for the years to come! But like I said: it's something if the online store does well. I hope to be able to do some conventions to be able to meet my lovely clients!

You have more or less made your shop debut at Japan Expo? What made you decide on that?

That's exactly the thing! I wanted to profit of *Japan Expo* to promote *LunieShop* there as it is the J-culture convention with the most visitors in Europe. And to see the reaction of buyers in real life!

Do you think it is essential for a store specialising in items from Japan to sell at events?

I don't think it's obligatory, but as I don't have a physical store I find it important to take time out for clients, to give them the chance to see the goods sold in real life so they can touch them, try them on, check the quality, etc! It also makes things easier for those that don't dare to shop online.

You import everything directly from Japan, how do you decide from which stores and what pieces to sell?

I import absolutely everything from Japan yes! I contact the brands that I like, followed by a meeting with those that answered so we can talk about the contract. If the terms of contract are satisfactory to both the brand and *Lunieshop.com* I place my orders. Up to now all orders were based on my own tastes and preferences, but in the future I will make sure that my orders are in function of sales and demands of my clients!

Will you sell at conventions in Belgium later this year and in 2014?

I hope so! I already foresee being present at *Made in Asia* in 2014.

You are an avid J-fashionista, which Japanese fashion style(s) do you love most and why?

Lolita for sure, as it's the one that I've liked since the beginning and the one I've liked ever since. *Aomoji kei* as, in my opinion, it's the coolest. And the easiest and most comfortable to wear as well *smiles*. I also love garments with a lot of colours, a lot like what the *dokidokers*, fans of *6% dokidoki*, wear. As well as *Decora* and *Fairy-kei*. And aside from those *Cult Party kei* and *Dolly-kei* also. In fact I love all the *Harajuku* styles for their differences and originality, which I appreciate.



Are there any J-fashion styles you don't wear yourself that you will still sell at LunieShop in the future?

I would love to find garments that are more *punk*, *dark*, *visual kei*, *cyber* and maybe even *steampunk*, etc! As I don't wear these styles it's harder for me to place orders, but I'm confident it will work out as I just need some time to learn more about these styles so I can make sure of the quality of the awaited items!

Which Japanese brands that you don't sell yet do you hope to sell one day?

More *Lolita* brands! I can always dream! If not, I adore *Glad News*, *Tralala*, *Swimmer* and everything sold at *Spinns*.

A lot of shops selling Japanese fashion hold events such as tea parties, will you be doing that too?

Smiles of course!

What is your ultimate goal and dream for LunieShop?

Becoming THE one-stop-shop in Europe for all fans of *Harajuku/Shibuya* fashion!

What has been the nicest thing a customer has told you about your shop so far?

I can't remember a particular sentence, but all the little things have really touched me. The thank yous, the cries of joy and the encouragements!

A lot of people simply adore your fashion style, do you have a message for them?

Thank you to everyone who reads and comments on my blog *grins*. And of course also to those who have made all the marvellous meetings happen that this passion has allowed me to participate in. And I hope to participate in more and more still in the future! Kisses!

Interview and photography by Hilde Heyvaert. All photos taken at the LunieShop stand at Japan Expo 2013.

Find LunieShop (and Lunie herself) online:

Website: www.lunieshop.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Lunieshopcom>

Lunie's blog: <http://lunie-chan.livejournal.com>

Lunie's tumblr: lunie-chan.tumblr.com

check it!



LUNNIE SHOP.com

Japanese fashion
Clothes 🌸 Accessories
Shoes 🌸 Wigs 🌸 and more!



Elementary, my dear Watson..

Braided hairband, Veritas. Glasses, Theo.
Deconstructed scarf, H&M. Oversized top, H&M.
Skirt with layer of tulle, Cora Kemperman.
Stockings, H&M. Boots, Kickers. Watch, Fossil.
Style: dark (kuro) mori-kei.

Hair flowers, Forever 21. Scarf, Disneyland Paris.
Woolen jumper, vintage. Trousers, Airfield.
Shoes, Sacha.
Style mix between
Mori Girl and Aomiji kei.







Dark Symphony by Lady Sloth during the Japanese fashion show of the *Lolita Convention* in Paris, France, Monday July 8.

Find Lady Sloth online:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LadySloth>

Livejournal: <http://ladyslothshop.livejournal.com>

Concept art by Roxiee (<https://www.facebook.com/creepylittlewonderland>).



Hairband, Hema. **Specs**, Theo. **Origami collar blouse**, Asos. **Tie**, H&M Man. **Blazer**, H&M. **Waistcoat**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Bracelet**, model's own. **Wristwatch**, Fossil. **Skirt**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Petticoat**, Dear Celine. **Boots**, Forever 21. **Bag**, Fossil. **Fox keychain**, Hema. **Umbrella**, Lisbeth Dahl.



Hat, customised H&M. **Blouse**, H&M. **Vest**, Takko. **Bag**, vintage. **Skirt**, Boguta. **Tights**, Primark. **Boots**, Deichmann.



© Margot Van Malderen

Want to find out more about Margot and her awesome art?
Then read the interview with her in this issue!

EVENT CALENDAR

All dates and information may be subject to change, none of this is within our control.

SEPTEMBER

Cosplay & Manga Convention

Date: 7 & 8

Venue: Japanese Garden

City: Hasselt

Country: Belgium

www.japanscentrum.be

Elf Fantasy Fair Arcen

Date: 14 & 15

Venue: Arcen Castle (gardens)

City: Arcen

Country: The Netherlands

www.elffantasyfair.com

the Gazette on Tour

20: Le Trianon, Paris, France,
www.letrianon.fr

22: Le Phare, Toulouse, France,
www.premier-pression.com

25: FZW, Dortmund, Germany,
www.fzw.de

27: Muffathalle, Munich, Germany,
www.muffatwerk.de

29: The Circus, Helsinki, Finland,
www.thecircus.fi

Pirates, eine Abenteuerliche Zeitreise

Date: 20-22

Venue: Brückenkopf – Park Jülich

City: Aachen

Country: Germany

www.piraten-abenteuer.de

Tokyo Crazy Kawaii Party

live on stage: SPYAIR

Date: 20-22

Venue: Parc Floral de Paris

City: Paris

Country: France

<http://www.crazykawaii.com>

Chibi-Kamecon

Date: 22

Venue: Zaal Daverlo

City: Assebroek (near Bruges)

Country: Belgium

Do a google search because the FB link is hell a long!

VAMPS World Tour

Date: 28

Venue: Sala Apolo

City: Barcelona

Country: Spain

OCTOBER

VAMPS World Tour

1: L'Olympia, Paris, France

3: Kesselhaus, Berlin, Germany

7: O2 Academy Islington,
London, UK

FACTS 20th anniversary

Date: 19 – 20

Venue: Flanders Expo

City: Ghent

Country: Belgium

www.facts.be

Metal Female Voices Fest

live on stage: eleanor

Date: 18-20

Venue: Oktoberhallen

City: Wieze

Country: Belgium

www.metalfemalevoicesfest.be

ONE OK ROCK on tour

23: Le Trianon, Paris, France

24: Brückenforum, Bonn, Germany

26: O2 Academy Islington,
London, UK

27: Le Bataclan, Paris, France

29: Melkweg, Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

<http://www.b7klan.com>

MCM London/Comic Con

Date: 25 - 27

Venue: Excel - Royal Albert Dock

City: London

Country: UK

www.mcmcomiccon.com/london

NOVEMBER

Japan Expo Belgium

Date: 1 - 3

Venue: Tour & Taxis

City: Brussels

Country: Belgium

<http://www.japan-expo.be>

Emporium Vernesque

Date: 16

Venue: Willemeen

City: Arnhem

Country: the Netherlands

HALLOWEEN at Schloss Heinrichshorst

The Noble Blood Vampire Chronicles

Book release party & Halloween Ball

Date: 2

Venue: Castle Heinrichshorst

City: Rögatz

Country: Germany

<http://www.viona-art.com>



Nippon Zasshi's 5th anniversary

Date: 16

Venue: CC Rix

City: Deurne

Country: Belgium

www.nipponzasshi.be

www.nipponzasshi.be



We bestaan 5 jaar!

En dat willen we vieren

Zat 16 nov 2013

Van 10u tot 18u

Inkom: €5

Wie?
De Nippon Zasshi crew!

Jullie!

Wat?

Games, Workshops, Tom-

bola, Snacks, Exhibition

Waar?

CC Rix

Frans Messingstraat 36,

2100 Deurne

Hoe?

Tram 5 tot halte

Ten Eekhovlei



VU: Nick Hofman
Hillarestraat 189, 9160 Lokeren
Niet op de openbare weg gooien

BCM SNAP

Want to be in the next edition's Snap page?
Send a photo of yourself wearing J-fashion, any kind will do, or steampunk (due to the current popularity of the style in Japan)
to hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com
and you may very well see yourself featured in the next edition!



JAPAN EXPO SNAP!

Expo Paris-Nord-Villepinte, Villepinte, France, July 4 - 7

Photography by Babs Barning, Hilde Heyvaert, Bert Van den Wyngaert and Anso Vermeylen.



LOLITA CONVENTION SNAP!

Salle 66Pelleport, Paris, France, July 7 - 8

Photography by Babs Barning.



ATSUSACON SNAP!

Antwerp Expo, Antwerp, Belgium, July 20 - 21

Photography by Babs Barning and Hilde Heyvaert.

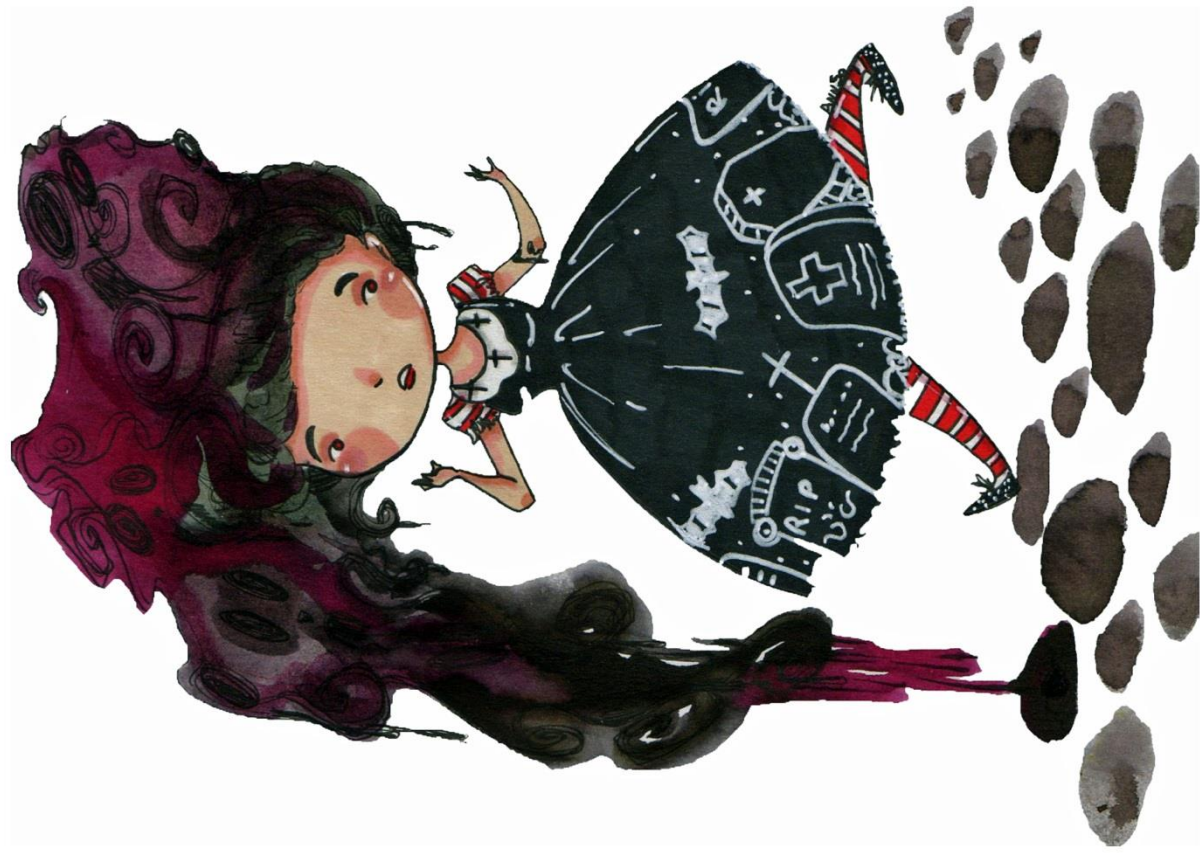


J-FASHION WALK AT THE ANTWERP ZOO SNAP!

Zoo, Antwerp, Belgium, August 10

Photography by Babs Barring, Hilde Heyvaert and Lunie.





Happy Halloween!

NEXT EDITION

Our next edition will be BCM # 15,
spanning the months
November and December 2013.
As is tradition, it'll be our
Holiday edition!

Fashion

Style Spotlight: Christmas Lolita fashion

Christmas J-fashion feature

We are still looking for photo submission for this feature.

So if you have a good quality high resolution of yourself wearing a Christmas (inspired) J-fashion photo, please don't hesitate to send it in! Any J-fashion style goes!

Doctor Who fashion feature

Doctor Who is back in November AND celebrating it's 50th anniversary!

we are dedicating a feature to the show! Same thing as with the Christmas feature, please send in your photos!

And more!

J-Music Corner

CD reviews

Concert reviews

Interviews with

INORAN

Rose Noire

ADAMS

Lifestyle

Event reviews

Belgian Cupcakes Lolita fashion meets

Cosplay & Manga Convention

Elf Fantasy Fair Arcen

Chibi-Kamecon

FACTS

and several more!

And much, much more!

If you want to be featured in any of our outfit snaps, send in a photo of yourself wearing J-fashion (any style allowed), or come pose for us if you see a photographer of BCM at an event and you may very well see yourself in the next Snap!

And more...

Greeting card with art by Annso

Exclusive art by Margot Van Malderen!





Art Cube, live at Takadanobaba Area, Tokyo, Japan on April 17 2013.
Photo by Helcanen (www.helcanen.be).